

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently amended) An isolated oligoribonucleotide consisting of two separate complementary ~~oligoribonucleotide~~ RNA single strands forming a double-stranded structure (dsRNA),

wherein said separate RNA strands are chemically linked,

wherein the dsRNA is 21 base pairs in length,

wherein the dsRNA does not comprise a full length RNA transcript of a mammalian target gene,

wherein one strand of the dsRNA is complementary to less than the full length of an RNA transcript of said mammalian target gene, and

wherein the dsRNA specifically inhibits the expression of said mammalian target gene using dsRNA-mediated interference.

17. (Previously presented) The dsRNA of claim 16, wherein said chemical linkage is formed by a covalent bond or hydrogen bond.

18. (Previously presented) The dsRNA of claim 16, wherein said one strand of said dsRNA is fully complementary to less than the full length of an RNA transcript of a mammalian target gene.

19. (New) The dsRNA of claim 16, wherein said chemical linkage is a covalent linkage.

20. (New) The dsRNA of claim 19, wherein said covalent linkage comprises a C18 linker group.

21. (New) The dsRNA of claim 16, wherein said chemical linkage is a labile linkage.

22. (New) The dsRNA of claim 22, wherein said labile linkage comprises a disulfide bridge.

23. (New) The dsRNA of claim 16, wherein said chemical linkage comprises a covalent linkage that is labile.

24. (New) The dsRNA of claim 16, wherein the RNA transcript is a primary or a processed RNA.

25. (New) The dsRNA of claim 16, wherein said one strand of said dsRNA is fully complementary to less than the full length of an RNA transcript of a mammalian target gene.

26. (New) The dsRNA of claim 16 or 25, wherein said two separate complementary strands are fully complementary to each other.

27. (New) The dsRNA of claim 16, wherein one of the single strands is complementary to the other of the single strands, wherein the two separate single strands hybridize to each other to form the double-stranded structure, and wherein the one of the single strands is also chemically linked to the other of the single strands.

28. (New) The dsRNA of claim 16, wherein each of the single strands is complementary to the other of the single strands, and neither is autocomplementary.

29. (New) The dsRNA of claim 16, wherein the dsRNA-mediated interference occurs due to enzymes induced by the dsRNA that cause the inhibition of expression of the target gene.